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FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 1895.

## CONTENTS :

<i>To Our Readers :</i> S. NEWCOMB. ....	1
<i>Scriptoribus et Lectoribus, Salutem.</i> D. C. GILMAN, 2	
<i>The Character and Aims of Scientific Investigation :</i> DANIEL G. BRINTON. ....	3
<i>America's Relation to the Advance of Science :</i> G. BROWN GOODE. ....	4
<i>Legal Units of Electric Measure :</i> T. C. MENDEN- HALL. ....	9
<i>The Humanities :</i> J. W. POWELL. ....	15
<i>Zoölogical Nomenclature :</i> C. HART MERRIAM. ....	18
<i>The Need of a Change of Base in the Study of North American Orthoptera :</i> SAMUEL H. SCUDDER. ....	19
<i>Scientific Literature :—</i> .....	20
<i>Ziwet's Mechanics :</i> R. S. W. <i>Osborn's From     the Greeks to Darwin :</i> A. S. PACKARD. <i>Bateson's Materials for the Study of Variation :</i> H. W. CONN. <i>Ethnological Jurisprudence :</i> D. G. B. <i>Botanical :</i> N. L. B.	
<i>Notes :—</i> .....	26
<i>The Scientific Societies ; Physics ; Anthropology ;     Educational ; Forthcoming Books.</i>	
<i>Societies and Academies.</i> .....	28
<i>Scientific Journals.</i> .....	28
<i>New Books.</i> .....	28

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## TO OUR READERS.

AFTER a brief period of suspension this journal again appears, greeting its readers with the compliments of the season. The interest in its future which has been shown in various quarters during the past few months, convinces its editorial staff that there is room for a journal devoted to the promotion of intercourse among those inter-

ested in the study of nature. The separation of our investigators around many widely separated centres, and the consequent lack of communication between them, increases the necessity of such a journal, as well as the difficulty of adapting it to the wants of all classes of subscribers. The experience of centuries shows that great success in advancing scientific knowledge cannot be expected even from the most gifted men, so long as they remain isolated. The attrition of like minds is almost as necessary to intellectual production as companionship is to conversation. In saying this I am not unmindful that such men as Copernicus, Kepler and Leibnitz were little stimulated by the companionship of other minds while thinking out their great works. But if the age for discoveries of the kind which these men made is not past, it is certain that work of the kind they did can be repeated only once in many generations. What other and less fortunate investigators have to do is to develop ideas, investigate facts, and discover laws. The commencement of this work of development on a large scale, and with brilliant success, was coeval with the formation of the Royal Society of London and the Academy of Sciences of France. When these bodies came together their members began to talk and to think. How imperfectly they thought, and how little they knew the way to learn, is shown more fully by the history of their debates and by the questions discussed at their